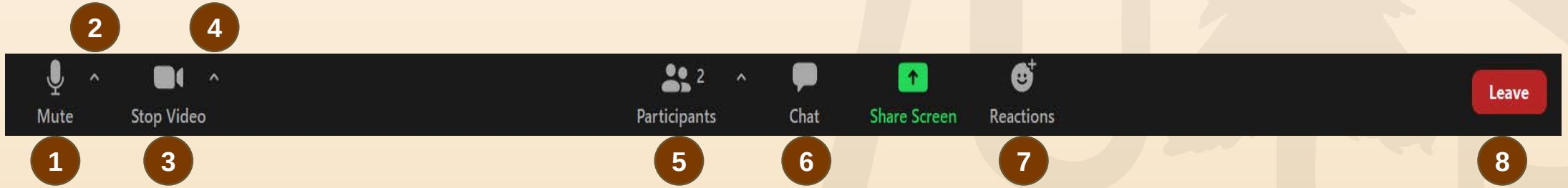
USDA Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Tribal Forum – 2025 Explore Act Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80

Thank you for joining us today. We will begin momentarily.

Zoom Adjustment Controls Help

Contact SM.FS.otrtribalcon@usda.gov is you need further assistance



1. **Mute/Unmute:** Mute and unmute mic
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Tribal Forum

Proposed Policy:

Tribal Forum – 2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80

February 11, 2026

Agenda

Opening Remarks & Why We’re Here

- Reed Robinson, Director, Office of Tribal Relations

Summary of Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80 changes

- Rob Barnhart, National Program Manager, Good Neighbor Authority

Discussion

Next Steps

National-level Consultation and Collaboration

Reed Robinson, Director, Office of Tribal Relations

National-level Consultation and Collaboration

The Forest Service is providing increased and more deliberate opportunities for consultation and collaboration with decisionmakers who have the authority to issue Forest Service-wide policies, procedures, and actions.

Collaborative Tribal Forums

- Forest Service Staff Offices present the context for and objectives of the proposed policy, procedure or action
- Forest Service and Tribal participants identify and discuss issues, interests, rights and desired outcomes

Consultation

- A *notification of the opportunity to consult* was distributed to Tribal leaders and Alaska Native Corporations via email on January 12, 2026.
- While face-to-face consultation is preferred, consultation may occur via any means agreed upon by Agency and Tribal representatives: in-person, virtual, telephone, written correspondence, etc.

2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80

Summary of Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80 changes

Rob Barnhart

Rob Barnhart, National Program Manager, Good Neighbor Authority

2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 – Background

- The EXPLORE Act (P.L. 118-34 H.R.6492) 16 U.S.C. § 8751 and 16 U.S.C. § 2113a was signed into law on January 4, 2025.
- Most of the provisions are recreation, lease, and access related. The law included expansion of Good Neighbor Authority. Specific Updates to Good Neighbor Authority provided through the Explore Act include:
  - Addition of Recreation Service (16 U.S.C. § 8751)
  - Modification to 16 U.S.C. § 2113a

2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 – Background

- Specific Changes to Statutory Language
  - 16 U.S.C. § 8751 was created through the passage of the Explore Act
    - Section 351 of the law included Recreation Services for Good Neighbor Agreements
      - Allowed both Technical and Financial assistance for Recreation Services
  - Modification to 16 U.S.C. § 2113a
    - Section 351 changes existing statutory language to include:
      - Extends the authority for Tribes and Counties to sale federal timber and retain funds as revenue
      - Authorized restoration on and off federal land (on federal land was omitted compared to the 2018 legislation in which it defined use on federal land)
      - Extended the Revenue Temporary authority to Oct 1, 2028

2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80– Why?

- New Legislation changes how the agency works with Good Neighbor Authority
- Direction updates ensure consistency of application of the law into federal policy
- Informs local decision makers of sideboards to the laws

2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80– Policy Framework

To ensure consistency between policy and operational practice, the Forest Service Handbook (FSH 2409.19 Ch. 80 & FSH 1509.11 Ch. 80) must be updated. The updates include:

- Adding clear language
- Expanding definitions and examples
- Updating model agreement templates & documents

2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80– Desired Outcomes

- Retain Local Decision-Making
- Enhance Local Collaboration
- Improved Tribal Collaboration
- Enable Economic Opportunities

2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80– What's Next?

- Notice of opportunity to review and provide feedback on policy changes
- Notice of final policy publication
- Engage with the Forest Service (local, regional, WO) through consultation to:
  - Participate in statutory updates & development of guidance
  - Identify pilot or demonstration projects

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR)

The FICOR supports implementation of the EXPLORE Act, with members representing:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- National Park Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FICOR's Tribal Engagement Subgroup leads Tribal outreach on EXPLORE Act implementation.

- Will deliver a Tribal Listening Session with a broad overview of the EXPLORE Act later this year.
- Please check FICOR's website this summer for details: ficor.gov

Kick-off Questions (from ITC-hosted Tribal Listening Session 9/25/25)

- Please describe more about how the revenue from a timber sale under a GNA agreement works (e.g., investment option? timeframe to spend? treated as program income vs. revenue?)
- Are there example projects for GNA, from beginning to end?

For more information on the ITC-hosted report from the Tribal Listening session: https://www.itcnet.org/file_download/inline/985202d1-9623-488e-8183-24a1fe65d2ff

Opportunity to Consult

- A *notification of the opportunity to consult* on the proposed policy was emailed to Tribal and Corporation leaders on January 12, 2026.
- Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations may request consultation at the national, regional or local level.
- Tribal leaders, staff and subject matter experts may also identify and communicate opportunities for collaboration and request consultation with the Forest Service via email at SM.FS.otrtribalcon@usda.gov.

2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80

We appreciate your time today and look forward to your continued engagement on the 2025 Explore Act GNA Section 351 Changes to Forest Service Handbook 2409.19 Chapter 80

For more information or to ask questions following this Tribal Forum,

contact the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations.

SM.FS.otrtribalcon@usda.gov